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HISTORY OF THE
METHODIST CHURCH
OF VAN METER, IOWA
Dallas County Ia.
1847 - 1932

STUART C. PETERSON

PASTOR



History of the Methodist Church
of Van Meter, Iowa 1847-1932
(Dallas co., Iowa)

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METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

VAN BETTER, IOWA.
S. C. PETERSON, PASTOR

SECOND ANNUAL HOME-COMING
50th ANNIVERSARY OF CHURCH DEDICATION
85th ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDING
OF VAN BETTER METHODISM

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1932.
ORDER OF SERVICE

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

PRAYER

HYMN "Come Thou Almighty King" 2 (235)

Sunday School Collection

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DRAMATIZATION OF THE HISTORY OF OUR CHURCH

(At the close of the drama, the entire
congregation will join in singing-

"The Church's One Foundation" 207

INTERMISSION.

VOLUNTARY

PROCESSIONAL "Holy, Holy, Holy"

CALL TO WORSHIP

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

HYMN "Faith Of Our Fathers" 415 (325)

PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE (Congregation seated)

"Like As A Father".....The Choir.

READING OF THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

"My Song In The Night".....Men's Quartet.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

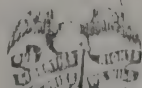
OFFERTORY

"Hail The Glad Morning".....Young People's Chorus

PRAYER.....BISHOP FREDERICK D. LEEDE

DEDICATION

DOXOLOGY



Robert M. Kelly
Iowa American Revolution
Bicentennial Commission

A Prayer in Autumn

THY beauty O God is upon us; autumn splendor everywhere! The trees are touched with ripe, mellow colors and the leaves begin to fall and flutter away, as frail as the generations of men. The birds are going south, following a viewless path—like the homing instinct in the soul of man.

Thou hast made our life a summer sowing, an autumn harvest, and a great white winter; too short for hate, and only long enough for the love that lifts the load we all must bear. O,

teach us to toil while we may, and do somewhat of good before our spirits take their flight on wings homeward bound—doves at Thy window. Amen.

—Joseph Fort Newton.

RALLY DAY

METHODIST churches everywhere are now preparing for the observance of Religious Education Week, culminating in Rally Day, a season given over to considering the importance of the Sunday School, both in its church and in the community.

For Youth in the Christian Adventure



THE EPWORTH HERALD," a journal for youth, offers an attractive, sprightly, youthful treatment of the problems that youth faces in its

attempt to live in the Christian way. "The Epworth Herald" is an indispensable companion on youth's adventure in Christian living. Each week the paper brings news of movements among youth the world around. Articles, stories, sermons, editorials, poems, and even pictures help to answer youth's questions about God and the world in which youth lives. The treatment of the devotional topics and the pages of methods are invaluable to every member of the Epworth League. This paper is published by The Methodist Book Concern.

The Purposes of the Christian College

◆

EDUCATORS hold a statement of purpose to be necessary for colleges. The following paragraphs well state the aims and ideals of 35 liberal arts colleges of the Methodist Episcopal Church.



In the Junior College

- A. To bring each student to the best possible state of vigorous health as a basis for successful living.
- B. To assist the student in acquiring self-mastery.
- C. To encourage adequate integration of the intellectual life.
- D. To widen the student's range of interest and appreciation by introduction into the main fields of significant knowledge.
- E. To enable the student to make proper choice of a field of concentration for the Senior College, and to make necessary preparation therefor.

In the Senior College

- A. To continue in the main the specific purposes of the Junior College, enlarging "E" to the proper choice of life work.
- B. To require for each student a reasonable degree of concentration in his chosen field of interest.

- C. To give the student after satisfying requirements wide powers of election, either to do further intensive work in his chosen field of concentration or further widen his range of interest.
- D. To prepare adequately for graduate work or entry into vocations success in which calls for a high degree of general culture and a relatively small degree of specialization.
- E. To encourage all students to work up to a level of their ability and to develop power in self-directed study.
- F. Finally, to permit the student the widest scope for the development and integration of his personality along the lines of his personal needs, his greatest abilities, and his most pronounced interest.

It is the purpose of the institution also to encourage in the proper ways the development of Christian character in its students, and to assist them in finding an adequate philosophy of life.

—From the catalog of a Methodist College.

AFTERNOON SERVICE

HYMN "Love Divine" 355 (2)

PRAYER

SOLO "Thou Art My God"...Barbara Ann England

RE-DEDICATION SERVICE..Conducted by our District
Suprintendent--Dr. R. M. Shipman.

ANTHEM "There Is A Land of Pure Delight"
The Choir.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

REMINISCENCES AND MEMORIES OF FIFTY YEARS.

JOHN'S QUARTET

"Pale In The Amber West"

"I'm Listening"

"When They Sing of Home Sweet Home"

Greetings and Talks by Pastors, Members & Friends

"God Be With You Till We Meet Again" 564

BENEDICTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We want everyone to enjoy this day with us. Make yourself at home, greet your neighbor, join with us in the basket dinner at noon, be sure to register before you leave, have a piece of our Birthday Cake, get one of the histories, and be sure to come back again for services every Sunday. We will always be glad to welcome you. Don't wait for another Home-Coming, but be sure to visit us as often as possible.

Beginning next Sunday, the evening service will start at 7.30 P.M.

All the young people of the church are asked to attend the Young People's Rally conducted by Bishop Leete at the Grace M.E.Church in Des Moines on Conference Sunday Evening September 25th.

The Choir will meet for practice on Thursday evening.

The pastor wishes to thank everyone who has in any way contributed to the success of the services today.

HISTORY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN VAN METEER, IOWA.

1847 - 1932

Chapter I "THE SETTLERS"

Someone has said, the history of a country or a people cannot be told without relating the history of the church. When John Wesley, M.A. of Oxford started to preach the Gospel of Christ to the people of England, he little realized how closely bound up with the history of the new nation about to be born would be the church which he founded. Nor did he realize the large place which the Methodist Church should take in the development of this great land of ours; and especially of the West- for then, the West was unknown to the white man, being in complete possession of the Indians.

It is impossible to relate the history of this church without also telling something of the early history of this state and county. Only a brief mention will be made however, to give just a suggestion of the background of our history.

The History of Dallas County, published by the Union Historical Society of Des Moines in 1879 says, "The tract of land now known as Dallas County was included in the territory which the Sac and Fox Indians ceded to the United States Government in treaty of October 11, 1842.....and ratified by the Senate on March 23, 1843.....In consequence of this peaceable arrangement, the early settlers of Dallas County encountered no difficulty with the red man, and the historian has to record no price of blood paid for the possession of their primitive homes.....Those expecting to make settlement in the "New Purchase", were

forbidden to come on the reservation until the time of its delivery into the hands of the government by the Indians May 1, 1843.....During the fall of 1845, Daniel and Lewis Stump staked claims in what is now Van Meter township in the Stump bottom northeast of Van Meter. In 1845-46, Many more came in settling around Van Meter."

From this record, we find that Van Meter settlement was the first settlement in the county, and the beginnings of our church probably the first religious organization of any kind started in the county. This history goes on to say, "The first church organization formed in the township was that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, sometime during 1847; and the first church building erected and dedicated in the township was probably the one in the town of Van Meter," (page 505- History of Dallas County.)

It appears from this record, that the beginning of our church goes back to the time of the very first settlement in this county. For, if our church was organized in 1847, as given by this early history, there must have been meetings of the members of the community for some little time before a definite organization could take place. At least, we know that the first organization was in 1847.

In another place, this history of the county says, "The first sermon preached in Dallas County was preached by Rev. Thomas Bird, a Presbyterian minister from Fort Des Moines. This occurred during the year 1846, but no one has been able to ascertain the exact location where this important service occurred, nor the exact date of its occurrence. Very soon after

this, and in the same year, a Methodist minister from Fort Des Moines preached in the house of James Black in what is now Van Meter township. And soon after organized a small class in that vicinity." This was, no doubt, the first religious organization in the county, and since it was located near Van Meter, and other facts seem to connect this class with the earliest class of this church, we are, no doubt, safe in assuming that this early class was the beginning, or at least had something to do with the beginning of our church.

No official records have been found which cover the religious history of this community between 1846 and 1869, a period of twenty-three years; but there were, no doubt, regular meetings of this class and other classes during this time. Most of the new communities were visited regularly by the early circuit riders who held religious services in the homes or in the open, wherever the opportunity was afforded. The early circuit rider was a real factor in the settlement of the west and the establishing of Christian communities such as we now enjoy.

It would, no doubt, be very interesting if we could obtain a detailed history of the labors and struggles of those faithful men who were responsible for bringing the Gospel into this community in the early days. It would also be interesting, if we could obtain a record of many of the early incidents in connection with the lives of those who received these men of God with open arms and sacrificed and toiled that the church of God might be established in the new country which was to be their home and our home.

To fill this gap, of which we have very

little record, it might be interesting to see what some of the historians have had to say about these early days. In an early history of Dallas County, we find these words, "In this day of missionary and benevolent spirit, the gospel in the west rather precedes than follows the settlement of the country. But in the earlier days of frontier life, the progress toward public worship was of necessity slow. Yet the devotional spirit of those who left Godly homes opened up here and there and organized bodies of worshipers, many months before they had a regular building for their services."

"The transformation of any country or locality from a condition of barbarity to one of civilization requires long-continued and faithful effort, not only on the part of the first settlers, but also of the majority of those who follow in after years. So also, it is in regard to the promotion and development of the Christian religion, that most important branch of civilization, and in fact, the great civilizer of nations. Its progress in a new country is necessarily comparatively slow for many years, and its promulgation depends to a great extent on the unshaken faith and untiring efforts of the few trustful, devotional, zealous ones who are generally to be found, in greater or less numbers, in almost every community, even from the days of its earliest settlement. While the human element is the means to a glorious end in this regard, yet it is a most important means in the effectual promotion of this greatest of all causes. And we should have no misgivings or wavering doubts with regard to the ability to perform the important part of this work assigned each of us. For if we will only rely upon the promise, grace will be given us each, self-

icient for the day." "Religious interests in Dallas County have always been carefully fostered by the citizens, from the earliest days of settlement until the present, not only in the county seat, but also in the country districts and in all the other towns and villages in the county. And in a county where the people have always shown themselves to be so thoroughly alive to educational interests as the citizens of Dallas County always have been, the result could hardly have been otherwise; for to a good extent, education and religion go hand in hand. "

"For many years after the emigrant cabins began to dot the woodlands and prairie, the settlements were so scattered over different parts of the county that it was almost impossible for any great number to assemble in any particular place for public worship, much less to erect houses or cabins for that purpose, and, as a consequence, for a while religious worship was known only at the home fireside of those who, in distress and privation, had not forgotten their devotion to Him who had graciously provided for them their dwellings, friends, and necessary comforts of life.

"Occasional preaching services were held in private cabins, and in the first rude school houses, which were always well attended and highly appreciated by the settlers who were hungering for the "bread of life."¹

W. H. Jennings, a former member of this church, in the story of his life, tells of an amusing and interesting incident in connection with one of the early camp meetings held in Iowa by the German Methodists. We are somewhat doubtful if such a thing could

(1-History of Dallas County -1879.)

occur today, because the ardor and enthusiasm shown in this incident are not quite so prevalent today as they were in the earlier days of our state. He says in his memoirs, "Religious meetings in those days through the country were frequently held in schoolhouses and conducted quite differently from what they are now.....It was no uncommon sight to see a person shout.....I shall never forget being at a meeting held at our schoolhouse on a very cold winter night when a man, with whom I was well acquainted, kneeled down to pray near the stove, which was red hot in places and full of live coals. When he got real earnest in his prayer he leaned back, striking the stove and upsetting it. The stove door flew open and the coals rolled out upon the floor. We boys shot out of the house. The man moved a little ways on his knees, but kept right on praying till he got through. In the meantime other members had put the stove back to its place and the meeting continued as if nothing had happened." He says in another place, "In those days Methodist Camp Meetings, lasting two or three weeks, were very common. While working for the judge one fall, a meeting was held in the woods near his house. Many people came a long distance and camped. I presume at times there were 500 people on the grounds. Great religious excitement prevailed, and shouting could be heard almost day and night."

The Methodist Church played a large, if not the largest part in the drama of the early West and the making of the West a really civilized country. Most of the early pioneer preachers were Methodist circuit riders. Wherever the settler went, the preacher went along with him, and generally the preacher was on the ground long before any real settle-

lements were made. One historian has said, "So the new country took on a new forms as new life flowed over the mountains, and into the new communities of the new states beyond the mountains. And, as the country grew, so the Methodist Church grew with it. As the country changed, so the church changed.....when forty years had passed and the day of the circuit rider was done....there stood not only a group of populous states, able to dominate the life of the whole republic, but als a Methodist Church recognized as the most powerful moral and religious force in those commonwealths."²

The founding and growth of our church is closely connected with this great religious epic of the west. Though we do not know who all the pioneers were who gave their best that we today might enjoy a Christian civilization and have an active and progressive religious society in this community, yet we owe them a vote of sincere thanks for the heritage which they have given us. We should ever hold their memory sacred, and we should honor them by being as faithful as they were in carrying the work of the Kingdom of God on to greater victories.

Those of us who are living today can hardly comprehend how great were the difficulties which the early settlers must have faced in their efforts to maintain the work of the Kingdom of God in the midst of the wilderness; but the church then, even as it does today, meant the difference between living in a decent, morally clean, and civilized community and living

2- From the "Story of Methodism" by H. E. Luccock and Hutchison. Cop. 1926 net \$2 p'paid. Reprinted by permission of the Methodist Book Concern.

in a community which has none of these advantages. There were enough God-fearing people among the early settlers to realize this, and these people were willing to pay the price in faithfulness, loyalty, and devotion, that we today might have these advantages. We truly owe a debt to them which we can only pay by building securely and well on the foundations which they have laid. Let us keep faith with them.

Luccock and Hutchison, in their "Story of Methodism", say, "No chapter in the age long westward march of Christianity is a more gripping and stupendous one than that of which our story of Methodism now becomes a part. The story of Methodism for sixty years.....becomes a vital part of the occupation of the continent of America from the Alleghany Mountains to the Pacific Coast. The long parade was one of the greatest of all times. It was one of the epic adventures of the human race. In rapidity of movement, in extent of territory covered, in permanence of results, that pushing westward of the American frontier from the Great Lakes, the Ohio, and Southern Appalachian Mountains to the Pacific has never been matched."

"If we are to catch the true significance and feel the thrill of the history of Methodism for this half century, we must always have in mind this moving column of humanity of which it was a part, and into which it poured its stream of influence. Nor must we ever allow ourselves to think of Methodism as an isolated or separate force. It was in the midst of and a part of the whole Christian advance made up of many other denominations in which were the spirit and daring of the pioneer and the passion of the missionary."3

This history of our church would not be complete without a fitting tribute to these earliest circuit riders who came into this country and started this church with the formation of the first Methodist Class, which later grew into a Society, and then became the Methodist Episcopal Church of Van Meter. This tribute is found in the words of Mary Carolyn Davies in her poem, "The Circuit Rider."

"God tramps on through the scourging rains,
 God vaults into the saddle,
 Rides alone past the dusty plains,
 God's back bends to the paddle-
 Cedar branches and sunlight through!
 And on, still on, speeds the lone canoe.

"God rides out on his ancient quest,
 Healing, saving, commanding;
 Here in the savage, unknown west;
 Settlement, cabin, landing--
 Well they know the steady beat,
 In the stillness of God's horses' feet.

"God leads to grace the pioneers,
 Who walk each hour with danger;
 Knows these grim men for his peers,
 Gives his bread to the stranger;
 Doing all that a neighbor can,
 God rides still, a weary man.

"God rides out! And found three states;
 Their scourger, their defender;
 Guides their loves, and tones their hates,
 Leads them into splendor!
 God--in the Circuit-Rider's breast--
 Once more, God built a world--Our West."⁴

Chapter II THE FOUNDATION IS LAID

Soon after the first sermon was preached in the county, a Methodist Class was organized at what was known as the Payne School House, located somewhere north of the river, just across from where the town was later located. After meeting in this place for awhile, the settlers south of the river found it difficult to attend the meetings of the class because of the frequent floods. There were no bridges across the river anywhere in the county, and when the river was flooded it was almost impossible to get across.

The group of people south of the river organized a class in 1853, and this class with the present church which later grew out of this early organization carried on the work which was started by the first class organized at the Payne School House in 1847 or before. We are indebted to Mrs. White, a member of this church in former years who passed away some years ago, for the following account of this early class. This account was written by Mrs. White for a Home-Coming Service of the DeSoto circuit some years ago. She says: "The class at Payton's school house was organized in 1853 by Rev. S. Swaringin with 13 members. Wm. Payton was appointed leader and James S. Demotte to whose recollection of Methodism in Iowa in the earlier days I am indebted for the following statement. In the spring of 1853 there were a few families of us lived on this side

* Mr. Wm. Hester (now living at Dawson) says, "I am sure that my father and mother, Isaac and Elenor Hester, were at the dedication fifty years ago.....For many years after we came to Iowa, our folks worshiped in a school house in the neighborhood, and there I attended Sunday School. Our Superintendent was J.S. Demotte, one of the leading Methodists of the time.

of Coon River. There was **not** a bridge across any stream in the county, **therefore**, it was with great difficulty and at **certain** seasons of the year impossible to **cross** them. We found it very inconvenient for us **to** have our membership at the Payne class. We determined to try to get a preaching place on this side, but his work was then so large **he** refused. A few days after this we learned there was Methodist preaching between North Branch and North River every three or four weeks on **Thursday**. We determined to try there. When the time came, three of us, Bro. Wm. Payton, Bro. Rose and myself mounted our horses and started to find the place. When we arrived at the cabin in the edge of the timber, we found Bro. Swearingin (the preacher) sitting in the corner looking through his hymn book. The congregation was not there yet. We told him that we were hunting a shepherd for the lost **sheep** of the house of Israel and told him our plans and what we wanted. He agreed to meet **us** on his next round and organize a class which **he** did. This class has had no connection with **this** charge (DeSoto) since 1873."

According to the above **information**, the first religious services in Van Meter were held by the Methodist Society which was organized as soon as there was **any** settlement here and some time before the **incorporation** of the town. The first religious **services** of the society were held in the homes of the members, and as soon as the membership became **large** enough to require more commodious quarters, the first regular public services were held in the log school house known as the Payton school located near the present Van Meter Cometary. Later, when the class outgrew the schoolhouse they met in the lobby of the **old** hotel which was located where the O. V. **White** store is now.

In 1868, this point was a part of the circuit called the Adel Mission. Very little is known about this relationship except that it existed for only a short time.

Following the relationship with Adel, this point became a part of the DeSoto circuit of the Winterset Mission. Apparently, it was expected that DeSoto would soon be a thriving town and that Van Meter would never amount to much. At that time, a regular pastor was appointed to DeSoto circuit which included Van Meter. However, Van Meter built a church before one was built in DeSoto and the charge soon became a separate circuit. The record left by Mrs. White gives us the following information about the DeSoto circuit (including Van Meter) at that time.

"Dugal Thompson was the first Presiding Elder and John E. Darby was the first pastor serving the charge two years.

"James Mosend, Wm. Mark, H. D. Mc Combs, Goodliff Brooker, Jacob Payton, S. N. Smith, P. Zimmerman, E. Akers and Samuel Shuck were the class leaders when the circuit was formed.

"The Stewards were as follows; A. Golden, Jacob Gabbert, Levi Brown (recording), Alese Logan, G. W. Robbotts, M. Chestnutwood, Wm. A. Ellis, John Chandler and D. H. Rose.

"At this early date in the history of the charge, steps were taken to secure a home for the pastor, and B. W. Payton, A. Golden, G. W. Robbotts, H. D. McCombs and W. A. Ellis were appointed parsonage Trustees.

"The report of the Board of Trustees to the Second Quarterly Conference shows that a

lot had been purchased and a house and small barn built upon it at a total cost of \$690. This property was sold in 1877."

The pastors who served Van Meter while it was a part of the DeSoto circuit were, John E. Darby who served, as far as can be ascertained, from September 1869 to September 1871, and W. T. Hesterwood who served from September 1871 to September 1873. The record left by Mrs. White again gives us some valuable information about this period. She says, "The first Board of Trustees for church at Van Meter were elected December 26, 1868 and consisted of the following persons: George Lane, A. M. Logan, L. Hester, Wm. T. Johnson and James Burnett, to which E. Akers was added March 13, 1869."

Chapter III VAN METER BECOMES A CIRCUIT.

The church as it now exists was organized before February 27, 1869, but no official records previous to that date have been found. On February 27, 1869, lots one and two in block fourteen, where our church is now located, were bought of Mr. F. D. and Hannah Wilson and Mr. William A. and Pheobe J. Wilson for the sum of forty-five dollars. The street east of the church which runs north to the railroad is named Wilson Street for this Wilson family from whom these lots were purchased.

The Trustees of the church at the time the lots were bought were: Isaac Hester, James Burnett, S. M. Logan, William J. Johnson and George Lane. The first church building was erected on these lots, soon after the lots were purchased. Mrs. White says, "At the Conference session held at Winterset September 10, 1873, Bishop Thomas Bowman presiding, the Van Meter charge was formed and DeSoto circuit was left but two appointments - DeSoto and Fairview,... During the first year of DeSoto circuit, a church building was commenced and got well under way at Van Meter. The Quarterly Conference records show that at the session held at the red school house June 5, 1869 the Trustees made report as follows: - A house raised, enclosed and occupied 22x30, Debt \$16.00, Subscription \$50.00 when finished, with lot \$1000.00. I have given the report verbatim as shown by the Quarterly Conference records. At the Fourth Quarterly Conference held at Payton's school house August 27, 1870, Trustees report as follows, church at Van Meter paid for as far as finished and enough on subscriptions to complete it. So far as we are able to learn from the Quarterly Conference records the Van Meter

church)
 /was the first building erected on the charge.

"The records of the 4th Quarterly Conference held at Van Meter August 17, 1873. W. T. Hostwood, pastor. The following report was submitted by the Trustees. Fairview church half done and is to be completed by the 15th of September. Half the cost paid according to contract. DeSoto church underway..... At the last Quarterly Conference for the year of 1876 Brother Isaac Hough was appointed to dispose of the parsonage property. The committee on sale of parsonage property perfected the sale of the same and made satisfactory pro-rata settlement with Van Meter as they ^{were} connected with the charge and were contributors when it was built. The Fourth Quarterly Conference of 1878 requested the concurrence of the Annual Conference in the sale which was granted..... At this time it (the charge) belonged to the Winterset circuit and the Council Bluffs District. And this suggests to the historian the wonderful march of civilization and population.

"The Council Bluffs District then extending over nearly the entire territory now covered by three or four. I. P. Stewart was Presiding Elder and Will S. Peterson preacher in charge."

The town of Van Meter was laid out in the year of 1869, but was not incorporated until June 1, 1877. So, our church was organized and it had been working in the community for a number of years before the town was founded or incorporated. An early history of Dallas County says of Van Meter, "The town has no lawyers and no saloons, rather singular coincidents, especially for a mining town; but the people are generally peaceable and prosperous....." This speaks quite well for the town, and it is

probable that most of the early settlers in this community were religious people. The first pastor of whom there is any record is Rev. B. W. Payton, who preached here during the Conference year of September 1873 to September 1874 J. S. Kirkpatrick, the second minister was a superannuate of the Illinois Conference. He supplied here from September 1874 to September 1875. The record of membership at that time showed that there were then one hundred forty-eight members and forty-eight probationers.

Chapter 1V

THE CIRCUIT IS INCORPORATED

Continuing with the more detailed history of our church, we find that on April 19, subscriptions were started for the first parsonage in Van Meter. On April 24, 1875 articles of incorporation were drawn for the "Van Meter Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church". A copy of these articles is appended hereto:-

Articles of Incorporation

This Certificate of Association, made this twenty fourth day of April, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and seventy five, between the persons whose names are hereunto subscribed, Witnesseth:

Article 1St.

The name of this Incorporation shall be, "Van Meter Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church, composed of the following appointments, Vis., Van Meter, Blue Ridge, Center, Jefferson and Liberty, situated in Van Meter township, Dallas county and Jefferson and Lee townships of Madison County, all of the State of Iowa.

Article 2Nd.

The object of this Society shall be the promotion of the interests of religion in our midst, and the spread of Scriptural

holiness throughout the world.

Article 3Rd.

The members of this Association shall consist of the members of the above named Societies, from time to time, as shown by the records thereof.

Article 4Th.

The officers of this Association shall consist of a Board of Trustees, comprising five persons, chosen from its members in such manner, time and place as shall be specified in its By-laws, or, in the absence of such specification, by the Discipline of the Methodist-Episcopal Church. The said Trustees shall have the sole management and control of all the property of the Association, subject to the present or any future provisions of the said discipline, and may adopt By-laws not inconsistent with said Discipline and the Laws of the State.

Article 5Th.

The officers of said Board shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, to be annually chosen from among the members of the Board, who shall perform the duties usually assigned to such officers.

Article 6th.

The following named persons shall constitute the Board of Trustees of the Association for the first year of its existance, and until their successors are elected, Vis:

Jesse Dillon

A. Golden

S. Renshaw

Wm. McLeary
and

L. W. Smith

Article 7th.

The Board of Trustees shall hold an annual meeting before the last Quarterly Meeting in the Charge, at which time the officers of the Board shall be appointed, and an annual report be prepared, setting forth the doings of the Board during the year past and the condition of the property belonging to the Association, a copy of which shall be presented to the Quarterly Conference. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the Board.

Article 8th.

All vacancies occuring in the Board

of Trustees shall be filled,
and all the business of the Association shall be conducted in strict conformity to the Discipline of the said M. E. Church.

Article 9Th.

All conveyances of property to this Association shall be taken in the name thereof, as set forth in Article 7, instead of in the name of the Trustees as provided in the Discipline. Any real estate of said Association may be sold and conveyed by the said Trustees in the corporate name thereof, when the said

Trustees shall be authorized to do so by a majority of the members present at a meeting of the Society especially called to consider the subject of such sale; of the time and place of which meeting, at least two weeks' public notice shall be given, by the Preacher in charge, on Sabbath or meeting days.

Article 10Th.

This Society assumes to itself all the rights, powers, privileges and immunities which are now, or which may, during the existence thereof, be conferred by law upon Societies of a similar character; and except as herein modified, adopts as its By-laws the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In witness Whereof, We have hereunto set our hands the day and year first above written:

George Gutschall	G. Fisher, Jr
W. B. Clayton	Jesse Dillon
S. Kenshaw	David Brown

At the time these articles were filed in ~~in~~ the County Recorder's office, the circuit consisted of the following points according to these articles; Van Meter, Blue Ridge, Center, Jefferson and Liberty all situated in VanMeter township of Dallas County and Jefferson and Lee townships of Madison County. With the exception of Van Meter, these were all school houses. Blue Ridge was located near the cemetery close to the Rufus Marquardt farm. Center was located near Mrs. Koehler's place, Jefferson near A. B. McCleary's place, and Liberty near W. E. Shambaugh's place.

The Board of Trustees at the time of the incorporation was composed of G. Fisher, Jr., Jesse Dillon, David Brown, George Gutshall, W. B. Clayton and S. Renshaw.

The subscription list for the new parsonage mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter must have been quickly filled, for it was only eight days later that the parsonage property was purchased. On April 27, 1875 lots 7 and 8 in block 8 of Clayton's sub-division with the residence thereon was purchased from Mr. Ira S. and Martha J. Peck for the sum of five hundred dollars. This is the property now owned and occupied by James Stump.

In September 1875, D. C. Stuart was appointed to the Van Meter charge. He remained as the pastor until September 1878 and during his pastorate the work grew and prospered. His son, Dr. George Stuart, married a local girl, Anna Golden, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Abram Golden. Soon after their marriage, they went to China as Missionaries and remained in the missionary field for twenty-five years.

It was during the pastorate of Rev. Stuart that our present oldest living member, Tayl-

or Jennings was baptized and joined the church. Brother Jennings affiliated with this church on June 25, 1876 and has been a faithful and loyal member since that time. Sister Jennings, who passed to her eternal reward during the past year, also joined the church at the same time.

The next pastor was R. J. Osborne who came to the charge in September 1878 and remained till September 1879. At the Fourth Quarterly Conference, under the pastorate of Rev. Osborne, Trustees were appointed to build the Pleasant Grove Church. These Trustees were: Goodliff Brooker, William McClary, and L. N. Smith. Within a short time, nine hundred dollars was pledged but the work was not begun until the spring of 1881.

Rev. J. W. Adair came to the charge in September of 1879 and remained in charge of the circuit until September 1881. During his pastorate the work was started on the Pleasant Grove Church. In 1880 a new Board of Trustees was appointed for the Pleasant Grove Church, consisting of the following members: Goodliff Brooker, Wm. McClary, L. N. Smith, George Roberts, Sidney Smith, John Hutchins and T. J. Killam.

In October of 1880, during Rev. Adair's pastorate, a cellar was put under the parsonage in Van Meter. Other improvements were made in the parsonage home at that time.

Mrs. Ella Clayton Leige, in writing about this time of our history says, "Sister Jennie and I had many thrills going out on horseback to collect missionary money for the newly organized Foreign Missionary Society, when the receipts indicated a depression as early as 1880!"

it would appear from what Mrs. Paige says, that our Missionary Society had its beginning about 1880. It is also quite interesting to note that a shortage in missionary funds and a consequent difficulty in carrying on the work of our missionary fields is not a new thing in this decade.

Soon after the completion of the new Pleasant Grove Church, class number three was organized and met at the new church. The new membership was made up of the former members of classes which had been meeting at the Liberty, Jefferson, and Center schoolhouses. This church was located about five miles southeast of Van Meter. The Trustees at the time the church was finished were: Charles McCleary, Rufus Hazen, Leonard Smith and Goodliff Brecker.

This new building was not dedicated until October 31, 1881. Rev. J. B. Gibson was the pastor, having come to the charge in September of that year. At the time of dedication, there was one hundred seventy dollars still unpaid for the construction of the church. On the day of dedication, one hundred ninety-one dollars was subscribed and paid so the church could be dedicated debt-free. C. S. Ryman, the Presiding Elder at that time, had charge of the dedicatory service. Rev. Ryman was greatly esteemed here and this community has had a name-sake of his ever since—Ryman Smith having been named for him.

THE PRESENT VAN METER CHURCH IS BUILT.

While J. B. Gibson was still pastor in 1882, the building in which we now worship was built. Captain E. D. Akers was the carpenter in charge and he not only constructed the building, but he also built the pulpit which we are still using today.

Mrs. Ella Clayton Paige now of Fort Dodge, Iowa writes, "My father, James D. Clayton, Jesse Dillon and Abe Golden engineered the construction of the building..... During the early history of the church, my father was Superintendent of the Sunday School for many years. We, as children, were taken to the Sunday School at 9 or 9:30 every Sabbath morning, then remained for eleven o'clock preaching service, after which followed class meeting, always conducted by Uncle Isaac Hester as class leader.

"Every year there was a Sunday School picnic--there would be a line of march from the church to the picnic grounds where a table about a half-block in length had been built for the occasion..... a picnic was a real attraction.....Mrs. Alce Logan" (was) "Primary teacher for many years" and Mr. Logan was always a ready aid.....The late Mrs. Frank Dunn usually took the prize for memorizing and repeating the most verses from the Bible.....Quarterly meetings were a great event. Many coming from a distance of ten to twelve miles--often coming on Saturday and remain for Sunday services."

The old building, which was a small frame structure, was sold and moved east of the Gear Brothers store building and was used

as a saloon, a store, and as a ~~post~~-office building at various times.

During the time of construction of our church, there were very heavy rains along the Racoon river and one night the river went over its banks and flooded the whole town. A great deal of lumber and other construction material which was piled up around the church began to float away. Brother Sam Cook tells quite an interesting account of how he and a number of other men waded through the deep water to rescue and secure the material which might otherwise have been lost. So we have to give credit to the kindness and promptness of Bro. Cook and these other gentlemen for saving many of the timbers which support this house of worship. In spite of this flood and other minor delays, the work went forward and the building was completed in the late fall of 1882. The exact date of dedication has not been found, but it was no doubt some time in October. This dedication was no doubt made under the pastorate of Truman A. Lampman who came to the charge in September 1882. It is possible, that the date of dedication of the church was October 4, 1882 as this date appears in the record in connection with the first mention of Rev. Lampman's name, but no definite mention is made of the dedication at that time. It is possible that in the future someone may discover a record of this dedication service so it can be added to this history.

Mr. Wm. Hester said, "I well remember when the building was erected. It was built by Captain Akers, an old soldier and a leading citizen and a carpenter by trade, who was a member of the church at the time."

Rev. Lampman remained on the charge till the Conference of 1885 when Rev. A. C. Heckathorn was appointed as the preacher in charge. Rev. Lorenzo Jean was appointed in the fall of 1886. He remained till September 1887.

In September 1887 Rev. John W. Wright was appointed to the charge and he remained until the Conference of September 1890. It was in 1889, during the pastorate of Rev. Wright that the church at Booneville was built. Since that time, the Booneville church has been a part of the Van Meter circuit.

James E. Bryan was sent to our church as pastor in September 1890 and he remained till the fall of 1892. It is thought that the Ladies Aid Society, which is still in a very flourishing condition, was first organized in 1891. Of the ladies who met together at that time and organized this highly important and faithful organization, only two charter members are still in our midst. These two charter members are Mrs. D. F. England and Mrs. Luella Hutchins.

Rev. G. A. Dietrick was assigned to Van Meter in the fall of 1892 and remained till Conference of 1894. Following Rev. Dietrick our oldest, in time of service, living pastor, Oliver W. Lippincott, came to shepherd the flock of the Van Meter circuit. Rev. Lippincott is now a retired pastor of the Des Moines Conference and is living in Indianola, Iowa.

Rev. Lippincott says, "This year was the most severe exertion in my thirty-eight years in the active work of the ministry. I assisted in special meetings at Earlham three weeks, at Norwalk two weeks, and then had

four weeks at Bonneville, four weeks at the Country church (Pleasant Grove), and six weeks in Van Meter. I held three services per day. The result of these efforts was some one hundred conversions."

Rev. Lippincott, by virtue of being the oldest pastor in point of service now living, is the pastor emeritus of the Van Meter Church.

At the Conference of 1895 J. S. Throckmorton, now retired and living at Derby, Iowa, was sent to Van Meter and he remained as pastor until the fall of 1897. In that year, we received as pastor Rev. I. H. Elliott who remained on the charge till September 1899. During Rev. Elliott's pastorate the parsonage was seriously damaged by fire, necessitating extensive repairs. Rev. Elliott passed away at his home in Boone, Iowa on July 23, 1905. His widow and helpmate while serving at Van Meter lives with her daughter, Mrs. Ida B. Lloyd at Boone.

CHAPTER VI THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Charles R. Bair, the next pastor served for the Conference year of 1899 - 1900 beginning the twentieth century and the fifty-third year for the Van Meter Methodist Church. Rev. Bair passed to his eternal reward some time ago.

Rev. F. L. Watkins was pastor from September 1900 to September 1901. Rev. Watkins is now a member of the North Dakota Conference and serving the Fort Rice and Bollinger charges. His address is R. F. D. #3 Mondak, North Dakota.

Rev. W. T. Rink served the charge from September 1901 to June 1903. Rev. Rink died at Dow City, Iowa on April 12, 1920 at the age of sixty-two after serving twenty-one years in the Des Moines Conference.

J. C. Nichol the next minister to serve this charge came in September 1903 to February 1904. He was on the retired list when he passed away at his home in Minneapolis, Minn. at the age of fifty-five, having served twenty-nine years in the Des Moines Conference.

J. W. Caldwell the next minister to serve came in September 1904. He was re-appointed at the Conference held in the fall of 1905, but on account of his health he made arrangements to move to the west. On October 30, 1905 he started from Van Meter with a car of household goods but he only got as far as Casey. As the train left that town, it was wrecked and Rev. Caldwell was killed. He died at the age of thirty-nine, having served in the Des Moines Conference for seven years. Mrs. Mary Cal-

well, his widow, is supposed to be living in San Jose, California, but we have not been able to get in touch with her there.

The man appointed to fill out the year for Rev. Caldwell was W. E. Shugg. He came to the charge in November 1905 and served till the following September. His home is now in Anita, Iowa, but for the last year he has been in England visiting relatives and friends.

J. W. Harwood was appointed as pastor in September 1905. He served for one year. He was retired at the Conference of 1930 and is now living in Chariton, Iowa.

T. G. Aten is another of our old pastors who is now on the retired list. He served the church during the Conference year of 1907-8. He is now eighty-one years of age. He and Mrs. Aten are living at 220 Amerigo Ave. Fullerton, California.

It was during Rev. Aten's pastorate in 1908 that the first extensive improvements were made on our present church edifice. The church had been equiped with straight seats which faced the west, the pulpit was at the west end under the high circular window. Small class rooms, just alike, were on both the north and the south sides of the building. At this time, the north wing was made into a chapel and new circular seats, which we still use, replaced the old seats. The church was rededicated at this time, Rev. Golden of Boone being the speaker at this service.

J. N. Hozier, the next pastor, who served from the fall of 1908 until the time of the Annual Conference in 1910, died on August 8, 1916 at Hancock, Iowa when he was sixty-four years old. At the time of his death he had served 17 years in the Des Moines Conference.

During the pastorate of Rev. Hozier one of this church's representatives definitely made his choice to enter the work of the church. Rev. Harry D. Henry now the pastor of the First Methodist church in Iowa City, Iowa dedicated his life to the Christian ministry during that time. Our other representative in the ministry from the membership of this church is Rev. Chas. Thomas now pastor at Conway, Iowa. These two and Dr. George Stuart and his wife, Anna Golden Stuart, who worked in China as missionaries for 25 years, are as far as is known, the only ones from this church who have entered full-time Christian work. It is hoped that those in the future will have a far different story to tell and that many of our young people may hear the call and find the opportunity to give their life for the Master.

Rev. Floyd A. Smith, who is now the pastor at Woodward, Iowa, was our pastor from September 1910 to September 1912. Rev. Smith was the last pastor to hold regular services at the Pleasant Grove church. The church was closed in 1912 and a few years later the membership was

transferred to the Van Meter Church.

For Rev. Smith, the Van Meter charge was the beginning of his ministerial life. He was appointed to this charge as a supply by District Superintendent, Rev. McDade, in September 1910. The following year he was admitted into the Conference and returned to Van Meter by appointment of the Bishop, this being his first regular Conference appointment. It was in the Van Meter parsonage that their first child, Nelda Marie, was born.

Fred W. Ingvolstadt, D. D. who is now the pastor of the Central M. E. Church of Lansing, Michigan, was the pastor for the next three years. He came in September 1912 and served the charge until September 1915. Rev. John E. Simmers is another pastor who is now retired and living at Indianola, Iowa. He served for the Conference year of 1915-16. It was on January 10, 1916, during Rev. Simmer's pastorate, that the membership of Pleasant Grove was transferred to Van Meter. In this same year, on January 20, 1916 the building was sold to E. F. Goodson for three hundred fifty dollars and the proceeds prorated between Booneville and Van Meter. The surviving Trustees were J. R. Armstrong and J. S. Smith. This left the Van Meter circuit with only two points, Van Meter and Booneville. Early in the fall of this year a preaching appointment at Tucker Brush schoolhouse was added. This additional appointment did not remain a part of the circuit for a very long time however.

E. C. McGilvray is the only pastor still living, who has served this charge, who is not now in the ministry. He is now living in Council Bluffs, Iowa and is a Civil Service employee of the Post Office Department. He served

here during the Conference year of 1916-1917.

The next pastor, B. C. Lyle, served during the trying years of the war. He came to the charge in September 1917 and served till September 1919. During this time, this church contributed its part to the service of the country in promoting the Red Cross work, Liberty Loan drives and other activities. Let us hope, that our church can also make its contribution to the world's welfare by helping to overcome the evil results of that war, and may we also do our part to keep faith with the boys who served and gave their lives that victory might be gained in "The War To End All Wars." The war service flag of this church contained eleven stars for the following members: Carroll Martin, Albert M. Compton, Donovan Hutchins, Harold Van Meter, Lloyd C. Hulse, Allen Platt, Ralph Sweeney, Oscar Hayes, Bert Umphries, Glen Garvin and Lewis Grover.

Rev. E. L. Spiller, who is now pastor of the Simpson Methodist Church in Des Moines, served the charge from September 1919 to September 1920. His present address is 411 East 26th St., Des Moines, Iowa.

Our next pastor served the charge for two years. Rev. C. W. Brewer came to us in September 1920, and served till the Conference of 1922. He was very successful in building up the Sunday School to a high average attendance. The attendance for nine months of the time averaged about one hundred twenty... Rev. Brewer died on October 27, 1929 at Long Beach, California. He had been a member of the Des Moines Conference for fifty years, and he was seventy-nine years old at the time of his death. His widow, Mrs. Laura Brewer, now

lives at 237 Linden Ave. Tracy Apts., Long Beach, California.

William F. Lane, a probationer of the Conference, and a young student pastor, was assigned to the charge at the Conference of 1922. He preached for only a few weeks and then quit to give his full time to his school work. He is now the pastor of the Door Village and Westville Churches in Indiana. His address is Rt. 2 LaPorte, Indiana.

Rev. J. H. Findley was appointed to finish out the year for Lane. He came to Van Meter in October of 1922 and served till September 1923. It was during this pastorate, on September 17, 1923, that the old parsonage was sold to James Stump for \$1500.00. Rev. Findley is now retired and living at Corydon, Iowa.

The next pastor to serve the charge was Erastus H. Green, who came in the fall of 1923. He remained for two years, leaving in September 1925 to attend the Boston University School of Theology. At the present time Rev. Greene is the pastor of a church in Taunton, Massachusetts. His address is 18 North Rockland St. Taunton, Massachusetts. The Conference year of 1925 was a year of large increase in the membership as thirty-five new members were added to the roll. It was in 1924, during Rev. Green's pastorate, that the church was moved to its present location. Before that time, the church was located close to the corner of the lot. Quite often in the summer time, especially when it has not rained for some time, and the grass gets burned out, the outline of the old foundation shows quite plainly as a wide brown strip following the exact location or outline of the old church. When the church was moved, a basement was put under it which provided a kitchen, dining room facil-

ities, rooms for the Sunday School classes and space for the furnace which was installed at the same time. President John L. Hillman of Simpson College conducted the rededication service and was the principal speaker at the reopening of the church.

The Building Committee for the new church improvements was composed of; L. W. Fisher, H. T. Fearn, George Cutshall, A. M. Compton, and H. T. Smith. The Finance Committee was composed of; A. M. Compton, H. T. Smith, and Lloyd Hulse. The church treasurer was A. M. Compton, the Sunday School Superintendent was May Cook, the President of the Ladies Aid was Mrs. Howard T. Smith and of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was Mrs. Sam Cook, Dorothy Dunn was President of the Epworth League and Mrs. Lloyd Fisher was the Chorister.

For the next few years, some difficulty was experienced in getting the appointment of a regular resident pastor and the charge was cared for by supplies. The first of these was Marion Grant Rambo who was pastor during the Conference year of 1925-26. There was no parsonage on the charge at that time or for the next two years following, and so, the pastors lived in Des Moines and drove back and forth to care for the work of the charge. Rev. Rambo is now living at 2725 Westover Blvd. Des Moines, Iowa.

The next Supply pastor was Rev. E. T. Eggle, a retired pastor. He supplied the pulpit from September 1926 to September 1927. His present address is 1540 Tenth St. Des Moines, Iowa.

The last of the supply pastors was Rev. W. L. Cannon, now living at 3138 Eighth St. Des Moines, Iowa. He served during the Conference year of 1927-28. Although Rev. Cannon was a

supply pastor and did not live on the charge, his pastorate was one of the high points in the recent years of the charge. During the year he was pastor, there was a total of ~~sixty~~ one new additions to the church membership including preparatory members and those received by transfer.

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During the early part of Rev. Cannon's pastorate, preparations were made to restore the charge to a resident pastoral basis and the present parsonage was purchased from Mrs. W. H. Cock on September 29, 1927. The sum paid for the parsonage was one thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars. The new parsonage was quickly put in shape for occupancy and a new parlor heater was purchased for the use of the parsonage family. Efforts then were made to get a pastor who would live on the charge.

The pastor who moved into the parsonage and restored the charge to a regular resident pastorate was Rev. E. A. Cochell who came to the charge from Northboro, Iowa. Rev. Cochell was a student at Drake University, driving back and forth during the school year. A schedule of services was established at the two points on the charge, Booneville and Van Meter, so there would be a service at each place every other Sunday morning, and a service at Van Meter every other Sunday evening.

A Union Vacation Bible School with the U. B. Church cooperating was established. There were 67 enrolled and an average attendance of 62 the first year. The classes were; Worship, Missions, Bible stories, Drama and Hand Work. A Scout Troop was organized with twenty members passing the tenderfoot test. The 4-H and Pig Clubs of the community were organized. A Church Night service was held from October to March each year- average attendance about 50.

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CHAPTER VII
THE PRESENT

In September 1930, Rev. Stuart C. Peterson the present pastor, came to take charge of the Van Meter Circuit. For one semester and one summer, he has been a student at Simpson College at Indianola, Iowa, driving back and forth to take care of the work on the charge. The balance of the last two years he has given full time to the work. In the summer of 1931, he was sent as a representative of the Des Moines Conference to The Tenth Annual Rural Leadership Training School held at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

During the present pastorate, the work of the church has been carried forward with considerable success. One of the high marks in the history of the church in the matter of growth of membership has occurred during the past two years- eighty-eight new names having been added to the membership roll and quite a number of adults and children having been baptized.

The work of the Union Daily Vacation Bible School has been continued with increasing interest on the part of both teachers and pupils. The school held in the summer of 1931, with Mrs. Peterson acting as Suprintendent, had a corp of ten teachers, seventy-six pupils enrolled and an average attendance of sixty- two.

The 1932 Vacation Bible School had nine teachers, ninety-two pupils enrolled and an average attendance of eighty-seven. This year Mrs. L. W. Fisher was acting Suprintendent in place of Mrs. Peterson, who was elected but could not be in active charge because of other duties.

A Home Department was organized in the Sunday School with Mrs. Bertha Pitzer as Superintendent.. This organization calls upon the sick and the shut-ins every week, taking the Home Visitor and the Sunday School papers to them. The membership of the Home Department has averaged about fifteen.

The Church Night Services were continued through the winters of 1930 and 1931. The Average attendance was about fifty. The programs consisted of a fellowship Supper Devotions and a class for discussion and study. The subjects for study were: "The Foundations and the Background of the Christian Church", and a study of "World Religions" with stereopticon lectures on the missionary work being done in the countries where these religions are dominant.

A group of girls has been organized into an auxiliary to the Missionary Society. This group is called the Standard Bearers. Here, it might be well to mention that the organizations of our church are now supporting four children in our missionary schools, three girls and one boy. The girls are being cared for by the Standard Bearers and Missionary Society and the boy by the Sunday School. Both the Missionary Society and the Standard Bearers have done much good work in the interest of our mission fields.

A Mother's Club was organized in the fall of 1930. This club is open to any mothers in the community who are interested in the study of Child-Welfare. Regular meetings for study and discussion have been held during the past two winters.

A Union Young People's Society was started in the fall of 1930 with a group of young people from the United Brethern and the Methodist Churches. This society has held regular meetings during the fall and winter the past two years.

The pastor promoted and organized one of the largest Fathers and Sons Banquets ever held in this community in the fall of 1930. This banquet was held in the school auditorium on November 21, 1930, with well over two hundred fathers and sons sitting down to the banquet table.

The Easter seasons of 1931 and 1932 were marked by the Holy Week services which were held every evening of Holy Week, culminating in a Beautiful Sunrise Service each year. These Sunrise Services were attended by a large number of people each year.

Too much cannot be said in appreciation of the Ladies Aid Society which has carried on faithfully and loyally through the years. This organization has always been in the forefront when it came to any activity for the advancement or the improvement of the church. At the present time, they are making a substantial payment each year toward the local budget, and they are always doing something to improve the comfort and the appearance of the church.

The musical organizations of the church are, the Adult Choir which furnishes the music for most of our regular services, the Young People's Choir which furnishes special music for many occasions during the year, and the Sunday School Orchestra. These organizations have furnished the church with some fine music- Cantatas and other programs for Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day and other occasions besides furnishing the music for

regular services. As a part of the Adult Choir, we have at the present time a fine Men's Quartet which has filled engagements in other churches besides singing for us here at home.

This church has been able, during the last few years, to finish each year with all its Conference claims and local budget cared for by Conference time. The work of benevolences has also received its share of attention, the church usually meeting its full quota for missions etc. The past year has been a hard one financially, but due to the faithfulness and loyalty of the members and friends, we will again be able to meet our full quota for missions and benevolences, and we hope for the local budget.

During the Christmas season of 1931, the Booneville church installed a new Greene Colonial furnace with plenty of hot and cold air pipes to all parts of the church. This makes the building much more comfortable and will take care of the heating needs for many years to come. The entire cost of the new furnace was paid as soon as the work was completed. The Van Meter Church will install a new furnace this fall, and a complete renovation of the building including redecorating inside and out is planned for the spring of 1933.

The First Annual Home-Coming Service was held in this church on August 30, 1931. The church was so crowded that there was not even standing room left. Many former members and two former pastors were here. The pastors present were, Rev. E. T. Pottley and Rev. C. W. Lippincott. Special features of the morning service were, A welcome by our youngest member-Bobbie Fisher, a speech by our eldest member-Taylor Jennings, a roll-call of the members, and the reading of the history of the church. This

present history is the outgrowth of the history which was read on that day, much additional information having been compiled during the past year. Special music was furnished by our Men 's and our Boy's Quartets, our Girl's Sextet and our Choir.

After the morning service, we had planned to have a basket dinner in the Gutshall timber but when about half the crowd had gotten out to the picnic grounds it began to rain and everyone returned to the church. The dinner was served in the basement, and in spite of being crowded in until we could hardly move, we had a very pleasant and enjoyable time and we had a fine dinner.

In the afternoon we repaired to the church auditorium and held a meeting which was not on the schedule but which was very well attended. At this meeting, a speaker from Des Moines, who had not been able to reach another appointment on account of the rain, spoke to those assembled.

The Second Annual Home-Coming was also the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the dedication of the present church edifice and the 35th Anniversary of the founding of Van Meter Methodism. This triple celebration was held on September 11, 1932. Many former friends and members, and also former pastors were present. At the ten o'clock hour, the children of the Sunday School put on a dramatization of the history of the church. The principal speaker at the eleven o'clock hour was Bishop F. D. Leete, The Resident Bishop of the Omaha Area. A basket dinner was served at noon to all those present. In the Afternoon, there was a Re-dedication Service conducted by Dr. R. M. Shipman, the District Superintendent. At this service, we re-dedicated the building in which we have worshiped for fifty years to another fifty years use in the worship and service of God.

The balance of the afternoon program was given over to memories and reminiscences of the past fifty years, greetings from former members and friends, talks by former pastors, and neighboring pastors, and a general testimony meeting. Special music was furnished for the morning and afternoon meetings by our choir, the Young People's Quartet and the Men's Quartet.

This history should not be closed without expressing a special word of thanks to all those who have contributed to the success of the services on this day, and also to all those who have so kindly helped with information and service in the compiling and printing of this history. It is hoped, that in the years to come, when this history comes to the eyes of future generations, that they will be able to add a great deal of history about the continued progress and service of this church to this community.

May God richly bless every reader of this account of how God has directed the life of this church in the past; and may the Brightly Gleaming Torch of Faith, which was first lit at the source of all light- The Light of The World -Jesus Christ our Savior- never be dimmed or allowed to go out.

This record would not be complete without a greeting from those who could not be present at this triple anniversary. A number of our former members and also former pastors have sent their regrets. Some of them are too old and feeble to make the journey to Van Meter, others live too far away, some of them in California, and they find it impossible to visit us again. But in all their letters there is the message of continued faith in the Gospel of Christ and a note of thanks-giving for what this church has contributed toward their Christian life. Former pastors have told something of the joy of their service in this part of God's vineyard. And the hope is expressed by many that, though they cannot be with us at this time, they are looking forward to the meeting in heaven where there shall be no more parting.

We think it fitting, as a representation of what many of these former members and pastors would say if they could speak to us through the space which separates us from them, to print here a greeting from one of our oldest members which was read at our last Home-Coming service. The writer of this message in poem, Mrs. Taylor Jennings, has since passed to her eternal reward and will meet us in the final great Home-coming service of all the saints of God.

To the Members of the Methodist Church
at Van Meter, Iowa.

I am with you today in spirit,
And can hear the words of good cheer;
As you welcome the former members,
Who have gathered from far and near.

While I cannot answer in person,
As I sit in my old arm chair,
I shall go through the halls of memory,
And greet you in the membership there.

I shall think of the friends and neighbors
Who have shared our weal and our woe;
But will find a number are missing
Whom we loved in the long ago.

They followed the "Gleam" on life's journey,
And have entered the "Great Beyond";
But are waiting to welcome each of us,
When the master says, "Well done."

(Signed) Mrs. Taylor Jennings

Acknowledgements.

Acknowledgement is thankfully made to the following sources of information which the pastor has used in writing this history.

The Conference Minutes from 1895 -to-1931.

The History of Dallas County -1879 published by the Union Historical Co. Des Moines, Iowa.

The Records of the Van Meter Methodist Church from 1873 to 1932.

A paper written by Mrs. Mary White many years ago for a home-coming celebration at Fairview Methodist Church.

Acknowledgement is also due to many members and friends, and also former pastors and members who have kindly helped the pastor to check the reliability of certain facts and have furnished valuable information from their own records and their memories.

The pastor will appreciate the receipt of any record or information about the history of this circuit which can be added to this history when it is republished at some future Home Coming. If you have such information, kindly send it to the pastor. Thanks will also be due to those who will call to the attention of the writer any errors in dates or statements found in this history. We have tried to be as accurate as possible, but errors might have crept in, in spite of the care which has been exercised.

Copies of this history may be obtained for 25¢ each, postpaid. Box 836, Latersburg, Md.

PASTORS OF THE
VAN METER
METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

- John E. Darby Sept. 1869 to Sept. 1871
W. T. Hesterwood " 1871 " " 1873
(Note: These two pastors served Van
Meter as a part of the DeSoto circuit.)
B. W. Payton Sept. 1873-to-Sept. 1874
(Deceased)
J. S. Kirkpatrick " 1874-to- " 1875
(Supply- A Supperanmate of the Illinois
Conference. Deceased.)
D. O. Stuart Sept. 1875-to-Sept. 1878
(Deceased, May 31, 1910 at Clarinda, Ia.
Age 93 years; 45 years in D.M. Conf.)
R. J. Osborne Sept. 1878-to-Sept. 1879
(Deceased.)
J. W. Adair Sept. 1879-to-Sept. 1881
(Deceased, April 9, 1890 at Panora, Ia.
Age 61; 31 years in D.M. Conf.)
J. B. Gibson Oct. 31, 1881 to Mar. 30, 1882
(Deceased.)
Truman A Lampman Oct. 4, 1882-to-Aug. 23, 1885
(Deceased, May 13, 1902 at Greencastle, Ia.
Age 71; 18 years in D.M. Conf.)
A. C. Heckathorn Sept. 1885-to-Sept. 1886
(Deceased, Dec. 7, 1913 at Des Moines, Ia.
Age 66; 19 years in D.M. Conf.)
Lorenzo Jean Sept. 1886-to-Sept. 1887
(Transferred to Nebraska Conf. and retired.
Deceased Feb. 8, 1914 at-)
John W. Wright Sept. 1887-to-Sept. 1890
(Deceased, June 30, 1927 at Luther, Ia.
Age 77; 19 years in D.M. Conf.)
James E. Bryan Sept. 1890 -to-Sept. 1892
(Deceased-)
G. A. Dietrick Sept. 1892-to-Sept. 1894
(Deceased, Sept. 6, 1916 at Seneca, Mo.
Age 73; 11 years in D.M. Conf.)
Oliver W. Lippincott Sept. 1894-to-Sept. 1895
Indianola, Iowa.

- J. S. Throckmorton Sept. 1895-to-Sept. 1897
 Derby, Iowa.
- Isaac H. Elliott Dec. 1897-to-Feb. 1899
 (Deceased, Buried at Boone Ia. July 23, 1905.
 Mrs. I. H. Elliott, Mrs. I. B. Lloyd, Boone, Ia.
- Charles R. Bair Sept. 1899-to-Sept. 1900
 (Deceased-)
- F. L. Watkins Sept. 1900-to-Mar. 1901
 RFD #3, Mandan, N.D. North Dak. Conf.
- W. T. Rink Sept. 1901-to-June 1903
 (Deceased, April 12, 1920 at Dow City, Ia.
 Age 62; 21 years in D.M. Conf.)
- J. E. Nichol Sept. 1903-to-Feb. 1904
 (Deceased, Dec. 11, 1911 at Minneapolis, Minn.
 Age 55; 29 years in Des Moines Conf.
- J. W. Caldwell Sept. 1904-to-Oct. 30, 1905
 (Deceased, Oct. 30, 1905 at Casey, Ia.
 Age 39 years; 7 years in D.M. Conf.)
 Mrs. Mary Caldwell San Jose, California.
- W. E. Shugg Nov. 1905 -to-Sept. 1906
 Anita, Iowa. (Now in England)
- John W. Harwood Sept. 1906-to-Sept. 1907
 Chariton, Iowa.
- T. G. Aten Sept. 1907-to-Sept. 1908
 220 East Amerigo Ave. Fullerton, California.
- J. N. Hozier Sept. 1908-to-Sept. 1910
 (Deceased, Aug. 8, 1916 at Hancock, Ia.
 Age 64; 17 years in D.M. Conf.)
- Floyd A. Smith Sept. 1910-to-Sept. 1912
 Woodward, Iowa.
- Fred W. Ingvolstadt, D.D.
 Sept. 1912-to-Sept. 1915
 Central M.E. Church, Lansing Michigan.
- John E. Simmers Sept. 1915-to-Sept. 1916
 Indianola, Iowa.
- E. C. McGilvray Sept. 1916-to-Sept. 1917
 Council Bluffs, Iowa.
- B. O. Lyle Sept. 1917-to-Sept. 1919
 Dundee M.E. Church, Omaha, Nebraska.
- E. L. Spiller Sept. 1919-to-Sept. 1920
 411 E. 26th St. Des Moines, Ia.

Charles W. Brewer	Sept. 1920-to-Sept. 1922
(Deceased, Oct. 27, 1929 at Long Beach, Cal. Age 79; 50 years in D.M.Conf.)	
Mrs. Chas. W. Brewer	Long Beach, Calif.
237 Linden Ave., Tracy Apts.	
Wm. Franklin Lane	Sept. 1922 (short supply)
Rt. 2 LaPort, Indiana.	
James H. Findley	Oct. 1922-to-Sept. 1923
Corydon, Iowa.	
Erastus H. Green	Sept. 1923-to-Sept. 1925
18 N. Rockland St. Taunton, Mass.	
Marion Grant Rambo	Sept. 1925-to-Sept. 1926
2725 Westover Blvd. Des Moines, Ia.	
E. T. Fegtley	Sept. 1926-to-Sept. 1927
1540 Tenth St. Des Moines, Ia.	
W. L. Cannom	Sept. 1927-to-Sept. 1928
3138 Eighth St. Des Moines, Ia.	
E. A. Cochell	Sept. 1928-to-Sept. 1930
Afton, Iowa.	
S. C. Peterson	Sept. 1930-to- -----
Van Meter, Iowa.	

Note: The number of years of service in the Des Moines Conference does not always indicate the total years of service in the ministry. Some of the above pastors served in other Conferences before transferring to this Conference.

PRESIDING ELDERS AND DISTRICT SUPRINTENDENTS
OF THE DISTRICTS INCLUDING VAN HETER.

The following men served the District either while our church was a part of the DeSoto circuit or after it became a separate charge. The time of their service is not known.

Dugal Thompson (1869?) T. H. Read

C. C. Kabee J. H. Swope

Complete information is not available for some of the following men, but they all served after Van Heter became a separate circuit.

H. D. Collins 1879

W. C. Martin

W. T. Smith

John Hesterwood

C. A. Ryman 1881

C. W. Blodgett

D. C. Franklin Atlantic District 1895-1896

W. W. Ramsey " " 1897-1898

(Deceased Feb. 6, 1918 at Mt. View, Mo.
Age 74; 18 years in D.M. Conf.)

W. O. Allen Atlantic District 1899-1903

(Deceased, May 25, 1909 at Des Moines, Ia.
Age 60; 26 years in Des M. Conf.)

William Stevenson Atlantic Dist. 1904-1909

Jefferson, Iowa.

Elmer W. McDade " " 1909-1915

3136- 8th St. Des Moines, Ia.

H. R. Talley Atlantic District 1915-1923

Bedford, Iowa.

F. N. Willis " " 1923-1924

3956 Utah St., San Diego, California.

DES MOINES DISTRICT

Frederick C. Edwards 1924-1930

Perry, Iowa.

Raymond H. Shipman 1930-----

1400 Chautauqua Ekway. Des Moines, Ia.

OFFICIAL DIRECTORY
VAN METER AND BOONEVILLE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCHES

Bishop F. D. Leete-Resident Bishop, Omaha Area.
840 Omaha National Bank Building,
Omaha, Nebraska.

Dr. R. M. Shipman- Superintendent Des Moines Dist.
1400 Chautauqua Pkway, Des Moines, Ia.

Rev. S. C. Peterson-----Pastor.

Trustees, Van Meter.

Howard T. Smith -Ch'man.

Harry T. Pearn

Lloyd D. Fisher

Warren B. Payton

Ralph Jennings

Stewards, Van Meter.

R. L. Phillips -Ch'man.

Clarence Dunn -Treas.

Lloyd C. Pulse -Rec.

J. M. Gutshall

Roy A. Clayton

A. G. Felter

W. B. Payton

Trustees, Booneville.

C. Hougham

J. D. Phillips

T. F. Myers

Charles C. Cook

Stewards, Booneville.

Josephine Cook -Treas.

Charles C. Cook

C. Hougham

J. D. Phillips

T. F. Myers

Ray Myers

Mrs. C. Hougham

ORGANIZATIONSVAN MEETER

Sunday School.

Mrs. L. W. Fisher-----Suprintendent.
 Mrs. R. A. Clayton-----Primary Sup't.
 Mrs. Bertha Pitzer-----Home Department
 Suprintendent.
 Mrs. Art Bainter-----Cradle Roll
 Suprintendent.

Ladies Aid Society.

Mrs. H. T. Smith-----President.

Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.

Miss May Cook-----President.

Standard Bearers.

Lueta Baker-----President.

Union Young People's Society.

Barbara Ann England-----President.

Mothers Club.

Mrs. Art Bainter-----President.

Daily Vacation Bible School.

Mrs. S. C. Peterson-----Suprintendent.

Choir Director-----Mrs. L. D. Fisher.

Orchestra Director-----Miss Eunice Skelton.

BOONEVILLE

Sunday School.

Ray Myers-----Suprintendent.

Ladies Aid Society.

Miss Pearl Davis-----President.

Epworth League.

Miss Virginia Cook-----President.

MEMORANDUM

TO : Mr. Tolson
FROM : Mr. E. A. Tamm
SUBJECT: [Illegible]

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[Illegible text block]

[Illegible text block]

